

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: VOTER PERCEPTIONS AND PREFERENCES IN THE FRG

SUMMARY: A RECENT GETAS POLL APPEARING IN THE FEBRUARY 9 "SPIEGEL" PROVIDES SOME INSIGHTS INTO FRG VOTER PERCEPTIONS AND PREFERENCES. THE POLL SUPPORTS THOSE POLITICIANS IN THE CDU (E.G., KOHL, BIEDENKOPF) WHO ARGUE THAT THE CDU/CSU SHOULD SEEK A "MIDDLE" POSITION IN ORDER TO INCREASE SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE SO-CALLED "SWING" VOTERS. WE HAVE LEARNED FROM A SOURCE CLOSE TO WILLY BRANDT THAT SCHMIDT WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE MIDDLE WHILE BRANDT WILL BE MORE AGGRESSIVE IN ATTACKING THE OPPOSITION. THE STUDY INDICATES THAT IT SHOULD BE EASIER FOR KOHL TO ATTRACT VOTERS FROM THE SPD THAN FOR SCHMIDT TO DO SO FROM THE CDU/CSU. END SUMMARY.

1. THE BREMEN BASED INSTITUTE FOR MOTIVATION RESEARCH

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(GETAS) POLL WAS ANALYZED BY PROFESSOR KALTEFLEITER

IN THE FEB. 9 ISSUE OF "SPIEGEL." BASED ON THE CONVENTIONAL 1500 INTERVIEWS THE GETAS POLL GIVES THE FOLLOWING BREAKDOWN OF VOTER PREFERENCES: CDU/CSU - 25 PERCENT SOMEWHAT COMMITTED ("WEICHE") AND 12.7 PERCENT HARD CORE ("HARTE") SUPPORTERS; SPD - 23 PERCENT SOMEWHAT COMMITTED AND 10.3 PERCENT HARD CORE SUPPORTERS; FDP - 6.5 PERCENT SOMEWHAT COMMITTED AND 1.8 PERCENT HARD CORE SUPPORTERS. THE "SWING" VOTERS ("WECHSEL-WAEHLER") ACCOUNT FOR 19.4 PERCENT.

2. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE PARTY SUPPORTERS INDICATES THAT CDU/CSU "HARD CORE" SUPPORTERS ARE LIKELY TO BE CHURCH GOERS (82 PERCENT GO TO CHURCH AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE WEEK) AND LIVE IN MIDDLE SIZE CITIES OR RURAL AREAS. THE SPD "HARD CORE" SUPPORTERS DO NOT ATTEND CHURCH REGULARLY AND HAVE CLOSE LINKS TO THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT (66.3 PERCENT OF THE SPD "HARD CORE" SUPPORTERS ARE MEMBERS OF TRADE UNIONS) AND LIVE IN THE LARGER METROPOLITAN AREAS.

3. IN BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP, THE GETAS POLL SHOWED THAT THE SPD HAS A CONSIDERABLE LEAD IN THE 24-29 AGE BRACKET (54.1 TO 30.6) AND COMES CLOSE TO THE CDU/CSU LEVEL OF SUPPORT AMONG THE AGE GROUP 30-59. THE CDU/CSU MAKES ITS BEST SHOWING IN VOTERS OVER 60 BUT LEADS SLIGHTLY IN EVERY OTHER AGE GROUP EXCEPT THE 24-29. AN INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT IS THAT THE CDU/CSU IS AHEAD OF THE SPD IN THE 18-23 AGE GROUP (44.5 TO 39.8). THIS REFLECTS THE SUCCESS THE UNION PARTIES HAVE HAD WITH THEIR EFFORTS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. AMONG MEN THE CDU/CSU AND SPD ARE ALMOST EXACTLY EQUAL (CDU/CSU-43.4, SPD-43.3, FDP-10.9). HOWEVER, AMONG WOMEN VOTERS, THE CDU/CSU HAS A CONSIDERABLE LEAD OVER THE SPD (CDU/CSU-50.0, SPD-39.5, FDP-9.8).

4. THE GETAS SURVEY GIVES SOME INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO THE VOTER PERCEPTIONS. BASED ON A ZERO TO FIVE LEFT-RIGHT SCALE, THE AVERAGE VOTER SEES HIMSELF AS JUST SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT OF CENTER (LEFT - 0.23). HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEES THE SPD LEFT OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT (LEFT 2.27 TO LEFT 1.55), THE FDP SOMEWHAT LEFT OF FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER (LEFT 0.98 TO LEFT 0.84). BRANDT AND WEHNER ARE CONSIDERED TO BE CONSIDERABLY LEFT OF THE SPD (BRANDT , LEFT 2.78 AND WEHNER, LEFT 3.53). TURNING TO THE CDU, KOHL IS CONSIDERED SOMEWHAT LESS TO THE RIGHT THAN THE CDU (CDU, RIGHT 1.52 - KOHL, RIGHT 1.33), BUT STRAUSS IS CONSIDERED TO BE TO THE RIGHT OF THE

CSU (CSU, RIGHT 1.96 - STRAUSS, RIGHT 2.28).

5. WHEN THE LEFT-RIGHT PERCEPTIONS ARE BROKEN DOWN,
THE POLL INDICATES THAT THERE IS LESS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE KOHL AND THE SPD SYMPA-
THIZERS THAN BETWEEN SPD CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND

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CDU SYMPATHIZERS. ALTHOUGH BOTH GENSCHER AND FRIDERICH
ARE CONSIDERED TO BE RIGHT OF THE FDP THEY ARE PERCEIVED
AS CLOSER TO THE SPD THAN TO THE CDU.

6. A BREAKDOWN OF VOTING PREFERENCES AND PERCEPTIONS
INDICATES THAT EVERY PARTY IS FACED WITH THE DILEMMA
OF DESIGNING A CAMPAIGN WHICH WILL HOLD THE SUPPORT OF
ITS CORE VOTERS BUT WILL GAIN SUPPORT FROM "SWING"
VOTERS.

7. WHEN THE FRG PUBLIC WAS ASKED TO LIST THE IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES, A PRIORITY LIST INDICATES THE FOLLOWING RANK ORDER: UNEMPLOYMENT (26.9), INFLATION (15.8), ECONOMIC POLICY IN GENERAL (9.3), DETENTE POLICY (3.4), SOCIAL EQUALITY (3.1), LAW AND ORDER (3.0), WAR ON CRIME (2.8).

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8. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THE SPD PLANS TO USE SCHMIDT TO APPEAL TO THE MIDDLE VOTERS WHILE BRANDT WILL AGGRESSIVELY ATTACK THE OPPOSITION. THE CDU/CSU IS PLANNING TO DIVIDE THE LABOR IN A SIMILAR WAY BETWEEN KOHL AND STRAUSS.
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